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By DANIEL WALSH

U.S. Rep. John Adler joined two other congressmen seeking a federal review of nuclear regulations in response to discoveries last year of radioactive water leaking at the Oyster Creek Generating Station in Lacey Township.

Adler, D-3rd, joined Reps. Edward Markey, D-Mass., and John Hall, D-N.Y., in asking the U.S. Government Accountability Office to begin the review after the radioactive isotope tritium was found leaking from two buried pipes at Oyster Creek.

The congressmen cited similar underground pipe leaks found at six other nuclear sites. In 2006, tritium leaked into groundwater under the San Onofre nuclear plant in Southern California. At New York's Indian Point, which is in Hall's district, pipe corrosion allowed thousands of gallons of nonradioactive water to leak from a cooling system last February.

"These repeated failures, often identified after thousands of gallons of fluid have escaped, suggest that even now there may be undetected, radioactive leaks from buried piping at one or more of our nation's nuclear power plants," the three congressmen wrote to Gene Dodaro, the acting federal comptroller general.

Workers found the tritium leak at Oyster Creek after the plant's license was renewed in April, and plant and government officials say the leak was contained before anyone was hurt or seriously exposed.

Oyster Creek's operator, Exelon, deemed the leak's cause to be corrosion of two pipes resulting from faulty application of coatings to those pipes in 1991. Exelon has begun overhauling its pipe system so that every pipe on site can be visually monitored, encased or placed above ground, plant spokesman Dave Benson said.

"Exelon is looking at a way where we can put eyes on all these pipes at all times," Benson said.

GAO officials will consider the congressional request Tuesday, spokeswoman Susan Becker said. The agency serves as an independent investigative branch of Congress.

The three congressmen who sought the GAO study all have nuclear plants in their districts, but it's Markey who is a heavy hitter in Congress on energy issues. He chairs the House Subcommittee on Energy and Environment as well as the House Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

Adler stressed that the pipe leaks in question caused no injuries or illnesses but that it could one day happen.

"We don't want to contaminate drinking water or open people to exposure," Adler said.